

BOOK REVIEW

THOMAS G. BARNES, DEBORAH WHITE, AND MARC EVANS. 2008. **Rare Wildflowers of Kentucky**. (ISBN 978-0-8131-2496-4; hbk.). The University Press of Kentucky, 663 South Limestone, Lexington, Kentucky 40508-4008, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.kentuckypress.com, Hopkins Fulfillment Service, P.O. Box 50370, Baltimore, Maryland 21211-4370, 1-800-537-5487, 410-516-6998 fax). \$39.95, 220 pp., 220 full-color photographs, 10" × 8 1/2".

Kentucky is gradually losing many plant species to housing and industrial development, including coal and timber removal. These activities have altered landscapes and resulted in the loss of native plant species, hence the focus of this book is on the conservation of rare wildflowers. The Introduction paints a dire scenario for the Kentucky flora with 273 plants in the state listed as endangered or threatened, an additional 52 of special concern, and 60 species (historic) have not been seen in 20 or more years. The color images were taken with film before the transition to digital cameras. Common names are used in the captions for the color floral images but the scientific names are in a special section at the end of the text. Photographs were by Thomas G. Barnes, a naturalist and award winning-photographer.

The first sections of the book are divided into a discussion of native species: Reasons for Decline of Native Species, Reasons for Protecting Native Plants, Natural Communities of Kentucky (includes a map that shows the Natural Regions of the state), Rarity, and Extinction and the Preservation of Species. This section is required reading for anyone who cares about the preservation of our native floras. An all too familiar theme is documented: human lifestyles and overpopulation (houses and cars) result in Habitat Loss, Invasive Exotic Species, Pollution, and Overcollection. There is a thoughtful and compelling discourse on reasons for protecting native plants. Natural communities are described and represented by landscape and habitat color images.

The section on The Rare Plants is divided into Forests (pages 49–96), Prairies and Glades (97–121), In and along Rivers (123–131), Wetlands (133–160), and Cliff Lines and Rockhouses (161–166). The flower images are sized to fill a full-page or half-page and are seen against usually a dark or black background.

Lists of plant names (both common and scientific binomials) as well as rare and extirpated plants identified with codes (E=endangered, T=threatened, S=special concern, H=historic, extirpated or extinct) that also include mosses and one lichen are included. A list of References and index follows.

The size and weight of the book will limit use in the field. The intent here is not to identify each plant to species, but in many cases the picture is distinct enough to serve as a picture guide. The threatened biodiversity, esthetic beauty of flowers, and the appeal for more conservation efforts to save habitats and larger tracts of land for future Kentuckians make this book a valuable contribution to the state flora of Kentucky.—Harold W. Keller, Ph.D., Research Associate, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas 76102-4025, U.S.A.